***Contributing Effectively to Group Discussions***

***Strategies and Suggestions***

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Ways to make effective contributions to group discussions:

1. Providing Content

* Conveying information
* Stating an opinion
* Evaluating evidence

2. Prompting Clarification

* Asking a question ("What did the text say?" "I'm not sure I understood you; can you rephrase that?")
* Soliciting the views of someone who has not yet spoken
* Paraphrasing another discussant's statement to check your understanding
* Elaborating on what someone else has said -- provide an analogy, example, additional statistics, etc.
* Identifying underlying assumptions
* Spelling out implications

3. Posing Challenges

* Pointing out the lack of evidence to support a claim
* Providing counter-evidence
* Suggesting a different way of interpreting the evidence.
* Asking a speaker to identify information sources
* Providing a different opinion

4. Promoting Consensus

* Expressing agreement with another discussant's views
* Affirming the merits of a contribution. Suggesting a way to reconcile seemingly conflicting statements or opinions -- pointing out what they have in common or proposing a compromise
* Summarizing the main ideas generated so far
* Determining whether or not consensus has been reached
* Reminding the group of principle objective/s; showing how different contributions help to achieve the objective/s
* Easing tensions